



ILLINOIS PYRAMID MODEL EFFORTS TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2020 Evaluation Report



Governor's Office of
Early Childhood Development



Illinois
State Board
of Education



THE
PYRAMID MODEL
CONSORTIUM

Supporting Early Childhood PBIS

Table of Contents

- Acronyms and Abbreviations 3
- Executive Summary 4
- Illinois Pyramid Model 9
- Pyramid Model Evaluation..... 15
- Evaluation Findings 17
 - Q1. What was the level of participation across the professional development opportunities? 17
 - Q2. To what extent were the professional development events found to be effective and useful for participants? 18
 - Q3. What do implementing programs need to support their Pyramid Model efforts? 20
 - Q4. In what ways are Process Coaches supporting programs toward implementation? 21
 - Q5. To what extent are Process Coaches feeling prepared for their roles? What training and supports would be most helpful going forward? 23
 - Q6. What types of implementation activities are underway at the program level? 24
 - Q7. What have been the facilitating factors for implementing programs this year? What do programs need going forward? 28
- Summary 31
- Appendix A: Fall 2020 Program Profile (ISBE Sites)..... 33
- Appendix B: EC-BOQ Critical Elements and Indicators..... 34

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIRS	Behavior Incident Reporting System
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CC	Child Care
COP	Community of Practice
EC-BOQ	Early Childhood PBS Benchmarks of Quality
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
GEER	Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund
GOECD	Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development
HS	Head Start
IDHS	Illinois Department of Human Services
INCCRRA	Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
NCPMI	National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
PBC	Practice-Based Coaching
PBS	Positive Behavior Supports
PDG B-5	Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five
PDG-E	Preschool Development Grant - Expansion
PFAE	Preschool for All Expansion
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PMC	Pyramid Model Consortium
PTR-F	Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families
PTR-YC	Prevent, Teach, Reinforce - Young Children
TIC	Trauma-Informed Care
TOT	Training of Trainers
TPITOS	Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale
TPOT	Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool

This publication was made possible by grant number 90TP0057. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Executive Summary

Overview

As part of the Illinois Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Strategic Plan, state leaders and stakeholders are collaborating to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programming, and to support the ECEC workforce infrastructure. This work is being realized through a variety of federal and state funding opportunities for professional development and supports that are being offered to ECEC programs and the broader workforce. The ultimate goal is to ensure high-quality programs for all children across the ECEC system.

Illinois has promoted adoption of the Pyramid Model since 2017 through a continued collaboration with the **Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC)**¹. PMC is a non-profit organization that promotes high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model through professional development sessions, online training opportunities, Process Coach supports and guidance for implementing ECEC programs, and access to resources for implementation.

PMC organized and facilitated the services and supports that comprised the Pyramid Model activities during 2020. These activities included continued support for new and existing implementation sites, as well as professional development for program personnel and the broader workforce in Pyramid Model practices and strategies. There are currently 37 ECEC programs across ISBE, Head Start, and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care Centers that are working toward Pyramid Model implementation. Each program has a Leadership Team to oversee implementation, as well as an ‘external’ Process Coach who provides support and guidance on a regular basis.

This evaluation report addresses Pyramid Model activities and progress across the state, and was made possible as part of the three-year, federal Illinois Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5). The varied federal and state funding sources supporting the Pyramid Model work include: PDG B-5; the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund component of the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security); Head Start; and state funding within the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the IDHS Child Care system.

Pyramid Model Evaluation

The evaluation² of the Pyramid Model activities was conducted by Evaluation Partners, an independent evaluation and technical assistance firm. Findings from 2020 are provided in this report. The evaluation was comprised of ongoing feedback from the events to support workforce development (among the Master Cadre and Pyramid Model Trainers), as well as a deeper look at progress and needs across the Pyramid Model implementation sites. For the Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE) sites that were formerly

¹ ISBE and the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) previously contracted with PMC through other federal grants (i.e., PDG-Expansion, Preschool For All Expansion) for training and support for Pyramid Model implementation. State Leadership Team information and prior evaluation findings are available on the GOECD website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/Pyramid-Model.aspx>

² The evaluation was funded and supported by PMC as part of the IL PDG B-5 scope of work for the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). INCCRRA is currently aligning Pyramid Model training credentials within the state’s professional development registry – *Gateways to Opportunity* – to increase the availability of qualified providers and to help align data systems.

funded through the Preschool Development Grant - Expansion (PDG-E), the evaluation was a continuation of a Pilot Study conducted by Evaluation Partners in 2018-2019.

The evaluation was guided by a series of key questions related to the Pyramid Model professional development and supports, as well as implementation efforts within ECEC programs during fall 2020. Findings are based on the following data sources:

- **Professional Development Feedback Forms** – Online feedback following each virtual training event/opportunity.
- **Program Profile for Implementation Sites** – Brief profile of existing programs’ setting, prior experience with the Pyramid Model, and program needs toward implementation.
- **Process Coach Logs** – Documentation system to record ongoing support provided to programs.
- **Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BOQ)³** – Program-level implementation measure, self-assessment.
- **Process Coach Survey** – Brief survey to assess Process Coaches’ approaches, support needs, and perceptions of implementation at the program level.

Key Findings

- ⦿ There were more than 260 attendees across the real-time professional development events including members of the Master Cadre, personnel from the implementation sites, and members of the broader group of Pyramid Model Trainers. Additionally, more than 1,400 licenses for accessing the online ePyramid Modules in both Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) were distributed to the implementation sites for self-paced use among staff.
- ⦿ Across events, the vast majority of participants indicated having met the learning objectives for each topic and rated the events as being high-quality. The highest rated events were Practice-Based Coaching (PBC), Training in a Virtual Environment, and the PBC Equity Guide for Instructional Leads and the Master Cadre.
- ⦿ Participants typically found the statewide events to be relevant and useful to their professional practice. Across events, most participants expressed confidence that implementing the strategies has the potential to benefit the children in their care.
- ⦿ Program leaders indicated the need for continued training and ongoing access to the Pyramid Model trainings (e.g., PM Modules, BIRS, TPOT). Other needs included continued support from Process Coaches, assistance for engaging and supporting families, and guidance for implementing the Pyramid Model remotely or with COVID-19 adjustments in classrooms.
- ⦿ Process Coaches are collaborating virtually with Leadership Teams, administrators, and internal coaches, among other staff. In fall 2020, the focus was on re-establishing team plans and goals, connecting staff to professional development opportunities with a focus on Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care, and supporting programs to assist families during remote and hybrid learning.
- ⦿ Process Coaches generally feel well-prepared for their roles and responsibilities. On average, the group feels best prepared for supporting their teams around the use of Pyramid Model practices

³ Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality, version 2.0, Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Susan Jack, and Denise Perez Binder (2017).

and social-emotional skills development. Overall, the group indicated the most room for growth in guiding teams' use of data, approaches to Pyramid Model sustainability, and supporting equity.

- ⦿ Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training opportunities related to remote coaching strategies, guidance around adapting Pyramid Model practices to remote/virtual teaching and learning, and more opportunities to reflect and share “what works” with other Process Coaches.
- ⦿ EC-BOQ results available from implementing programs in fall 2020 indicate that on average, Leadership Teams are reporting all critical elements are “partially in place”, with a fair portion reportedly “in place”. The strongest elements noted were Establishing Leadership Teams, Staff Buy-in, and Program-wide Expectations. The greatest areas for growth include collecting and using data (Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes), and Professional Development and Staff Support Plans.
- ⦿ For a sample of implementation sites with data from two points in time, EC-BOQ results indicate progress over the past two years. For these programs, notable progress has been made in several areas including: Staff Buy-in, Family Engagement, Establishing Program-wide Expectations, and Professional Development and Staff Support Plans.
- ⦿ Pyramid Model implementation activities in fall 2020 included an emphasis on family engagement to bridge school and home; finding new ways to support children’s social-emotional development and sharing program-wide expectations; and working to connect staff to much-needed training opportunities. The training emphasis has been on Pyramid Model practices and staff Wellness (via ePyramid Modules).
- ⦿ Process Coaches described approaches that are helping to move programs forward. Examples included facilitating access to training opportunities, providing resources (especially from NCPMI), maintaining strong relationships with Leadership Teams, using the EC-BOQ as a guide for planning, supporting teachers’ use of Pyramid Model practices, and meeting programs “where they are” at this time.
- ⦿ Professional development priority areas include trainings to support families (PTR-F, Positive Solutions for Families); training to support equity such as inclusion strategies, the PBC Equity Guide, and Implicit Bias training; and strategies to address challenging behavior via PTR-YC.
- ⦿ Going forward, programs would benefit from additional guidance around implementing Pyramid Model remotely, ongoing support for staff buy-in, and continued support for families.

Summary

During 2020, state project leaders and the Pyramid Model Consortium collaborated to support the Pyramid Model implementation sites and to strengthen the broader ECEC workforce. The work this year has been carried out within the context of COVID-19, where programs are providing services through a combination of in-person and remote settings, and Process Coaches are supporting programs virtually.

PMC provided professional development to Pyramid Model Trainers, the Master Cadre of Pyramid Model experts, and to Process Coaches who provide individualized support to the implementation sites. Among the 37 ECEC programs, the findings in this report are largely focused on the 25 ISBE PFAE sites that continued to engage with their Process Coaches in fall 2020 in support of Pyramid Model implementation.

Program leaders across the implementation sites indicated what they needed most in fall 2020 to support their efforts, which included continued training in Pyramid Model practices and other foundational topics, and continued support from their Process Coaches. Teams also indicated the need for strategies and resources to support families during remote learning.

For their part, the Process Coaches documented regular contact with their programs throughout the fall of 2020, providing supports that echoed the themes shared by program leaders. Specifically, they assisted programs with professional development by connecting staff to needed trainings; helped to re-establish program-wide expectations in the new learning environment; and supported family engagement, among other activities. New systems and approaches for connecting with Leadership Teams virtually were effectively put in place, and Process coaches focused on keeping these relationships strong.

In terms of their own professional development, Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training in remote coaching strategies, adapting Pyramid Model practices to a remote environment, and opportunities to share and discuss strategies with each other. Other areas for development include supporting equity, using data, promoting fidelity in the classroom, and supporting sustainability.

General progress toward program-wide implementation was evaluated using data from the EC-Benchmarks of Quality. For the programs that shared self-ratings during fall 2020, on average, teams reported that the critical elements are “partially in place”, with a fair portion “in place”. A subset of these programs had ratings from at least two points in time, which taken together indicated progress over the past two years. Some of the specific Pyramid Model implementation activities at the program level have included working more directly with families and sharing resources, supporting teaching and learning through visual supports, and as noted above, promoting program-wide expectations in the new learning environment. As noted by both program leaders and Process Coaches, resources from NCPMI have been extremely valuable, especially for supporting families.

The evaluation findings point to some considerations for state-level project leaders going forward in supporting the Pyramid Model framework. These points are based on a collective summary of input from program leaders and Process Coaches across multiple data sources.

- ⦿ **Implementing the Pyramid Model in remote settings:** A key theme woven throughout the feedback was the need for helping program leaders and teaching staff conceptualize what the Pyramid Model can “look like” in remote teaching and learning. For example, how are high-quality environments and routines set up and communicated? How can TPOT processes to ensure fidelity be adapted to the new learning environment? How are the Pyramid Model practices translated to virtual learning, including addressing challenging behavior? As new guidance is developed these will be important areas to consider in the coming months, given the likelihood that COVID-19 adjustments will be in place through at least spring 2021.
- ⦿ **Remote coaching strategies:** Related to the above suggestion, Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training opportunities to support remote coaching and for adapting Pyramid Model practices to a virtual learning environment. Process Coaches may also benefit from a forum to share strategies and solutions with each other (i.e., COPs), especially in light of the changes to the current learning environment.
- ⦿ **Access to ongoing professional development opportunities:** Ongoing training opportunities for the implementation sites in all aspects of the Pyramid Model will be essential going forward. This includes the ePyramid Modules (continual access if possible), foundational trainings such as PTR-YC and PTR-F, supporting equity, and continued use of the ePyramid

Modules in Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care. As one program leader suggested, additional guidance around the suggested scope and sequence of trainings may be helpful.

- ⦿ **Continued support for Leadership Teams:** Continued and sustained support for Leadership Teams from Process Coaches – including continuing to build the capacity of instructional leaders for internal coaching and TPOT processes – will be essential. A Leadership Team retreat may be helpful in renewing the essential elements of high-quality implementation (including use of the EC-BOQ), and highlighting the importance of the Pyramid Model work at this time.
- ⦿ **Continued support for Process Coaches:** Beyond the shorter-term focus of remote coaching strategies mentioned above, Process Coaches may benefit from additional training to help programs support equity and use of culturally responsive practices, supporting internal coaches toward fidelity, guiding teams' use of data, and helping to move programs toward sustainability.

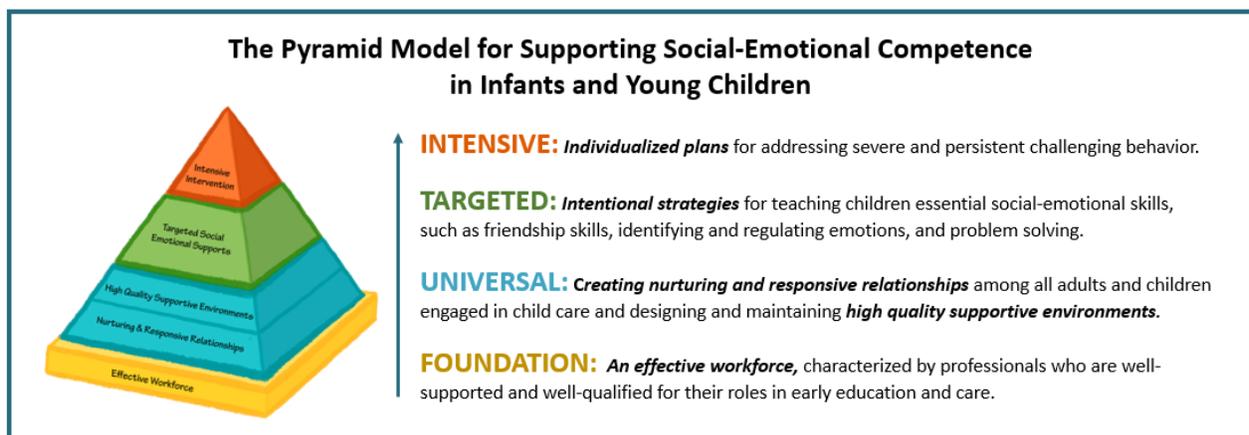
The Year 1 evaluation was based on several months of Pyramid Model activities that yielded descriptive information about the notable progress being made, as well as the unique challenges posed by the current learning environment. As the project moves forward and remote teaching and learning strategies are strengthened, a focus on program-wide implementation and fidelity to the model, and the related evaluation of these components, will be important next steps.

Illinois Pyramid Model

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Illinois Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Strategic Plan, state leaders and stakeholders are collaborating to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programming and to support the ECEC workforce infrastructure. This work is being realized through a variety of federal and state funding opportunities for professional development and supports that are being offered to ECEC programs and the broader workforce. The ultimate goal is to ensure high-quality programs for all children across the ECEC system.

To help achieve these goals, the Illinois Pyramid State Leadership Team, along with public and private agency partners, continue to promote and support adoption of the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is a tiered intervention framework of evidence-based practices for supporting social-emotional competence in infants and young children, as shown below.



With an effective workforce as the foundation, the Pyramid Model framework promotes universal strategies among all adults and children – creating nurturing relationship, and maintaining high-quality environments. At the next tier, teaching staff and specialists use targeted strategies to support social-emotional competence through intentional teaching of skills and strategies. At the top tier, individualized plans for addressing persistent challenging behavior are designed by behavior specialists to support children when needed.

Illinois has promoted adoption of the Pyramid Model since 2017 through a continued collaboration with the **Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC)**⁴. PMC is a non-profit organization that promotes high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model through professional development sessions, online training opportunities, Process Coach supports and guidance for implementing ECEC programs, and access to resources for implementation.

This evaluation report addresses Pyramid Model activities and progress across the state, and was made possible as part of the three-year Illinois Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5). The varied federal and state funding sources supporting the Pyramid Model work include: PDG B-5; the

⁴ ISBE and GOECD previously contracted with PMC through other federal grants (i.e., PDG-Expansion, Preschool For All Expansion) for training and support for Pyramid Model implementation. State Leadership Team information and prior evaluation findings are available on the GOECD website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/Pyramid-Model.aspx>

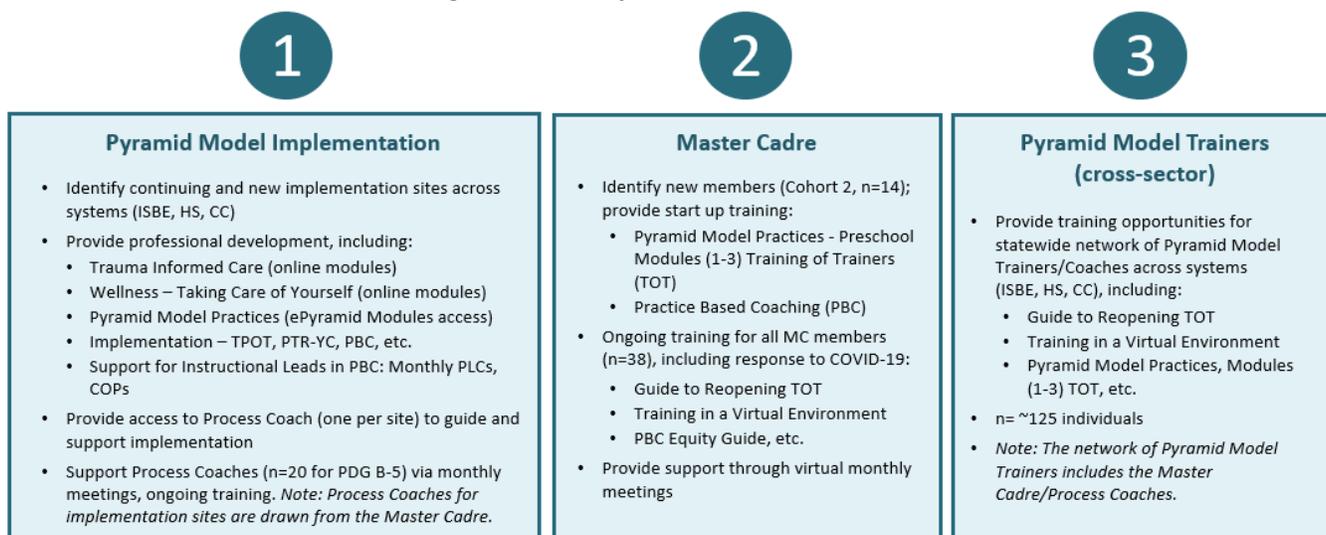
Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund component of the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security); Head Start; and state funding within the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care system. The Pyramid Model activities are described in the next section.

PYRAMID MODEL ACTIVITIES

The services and supports being provided by PMC were the focus of the evaluation, which included expanding and supporting the Pyramid Model implementation sites, and strengthening the broader ECEC workforce. These services are described below and in **Figure 1**.

1. Continuing to support **Pyramid Model implementation sites** within the ISBE and Head Start (HS) sectors; expanding implementation training and support to Child Care Centers (CC).
2. Expanding the **Master Cadre (MC)** to a second cohort of Pyramid Model expert trainers through professional development and monthly support, and supporting the larger Master Cadre. This is a diverse group of professionals (n=38) situated across all regions of the state who serve ECEC programs across sectors including ISBE, HS, and Child Care.
3. Providing professional development for **Pyramid Model Trainers/Coaches**, a cross-sector group of professionals with reach beyond the Pyramid Model sites. PMC conducted a series of needs assessments during Year 1 to identify the specific training and support needs of trainers and coaches.

Figure 1. PMC Pyramid Model Activities



In describing the project plan, it is important to recognize the influence of COVID-19 on the grant activities and the context of early childhood education. On March 17, 2020, ISBE officially closed all K-12 public and private schools, shifting to remote instruction; ECEC program closures and adjustments were also underway at that time. By fall 2020, programs were designing plans for re-opening across three different models: remote, in-person, and blended remote. As the 2020-2021 school year unfolds, these plans continue to shift in response to local needs and conditions. With respect to PMC’s project plans, all *in-person* professional development events and Process Coaching have been suspended until further notice. As such, Year 1 training events and activities described in this section have been carried out remotely.

To address these changes, PMC swiftly responded by creating virtual offerings of existing content for implementation, such as Practice-Based Coaching (PBC), Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) Reliability training, and others. Professional development offerings are described in the next section. At the same time, existing online offerings (“ePyramid Modules”) in Pyramid Model practices for Preschool and Infant/Toddler settings, as well as trainings in Wellness - Taking Care of Yourself and Trauma-Informed

Prior to this year, Leadership Teams typically began their professional development with a two-day, in-person *Leadership Launch* facilitated by the Pyramid Model Consortium. These events were designed to teach the basics of the Pyramid Model, and to launch team collaboration and planning based on the Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BOQ)⁷ for program-wide implementation. This year, start-up events were provided virtually, with an introduction from PMC and follow-up with each program’s Process Coach. Beyond these initial events, programs have access to Pyramid Model practices (Modules 1, 2, and 3) through virtual trainings facilitated by Process Coaches, as well as access to the online ePyramid Modules for self-paced learning.

PMC also offered a series of virtual professional development events to Leadership Teams and other program personnel to further prepare them for implementing the Pyramid Model with fidelity. For example, *Practice-Based Coaching (PBC)* is a two-day event for instructional leaders, team members, and other staff to learn about creating shared goals and action plans, conducting focused observation, and providing feedback to practitioners to support Pyramid Model implementation. The *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)*⁸ *Reliability Training* is a two-day event designed to prepare instructional leaders and other personnel who support teachers for administering the TPOT, a measure of implementation fidelity at the practitioner level. This year’s offerings also included access to multiple licenses to ePyramid Modules in Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care. The virtual training opportunities provided by PMC across all levels – implementation sites, the Master Cadre, and Pyramid Model Trainers (as described in Figure 1) – are shown in **Table 2**. Descriptions are based on PMC event information.

**Table 2. PMC Pyramid Model Professional Development Events
(May - December 2020)**

Dates	Event / Audience	Description
MAY - JUNE		
May 5-6	Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) / Master Cadre, Cohort 2	Training event for new Master Cadre members to learn about PBC processes including creating shared goals and action plans, conducting focused observation, and providing feedback to practitioners.
June 17-19	Pyramid Model Practices Modules – Preschool TOT / Master Cadre, Cohort 2	Three-day virtual event to provide instruction on the use of the Promoting Social-Emotional Competence training modules for delivering high fidelity training to classroom practitioners for children ages 2-5 years.
SEPTEMBER		
Access provided in September (self-paced, ongoing)	Wellness – Taking Care of Yourself, ePyramid Modules / Implementation Sites	Two hours of online lessons designed to help program staff understand the link between their own well-being and children’s behavior. This training addresses how to recognize and reduce the effects of staff stress, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma. The practice of mindfulness is presented and practiced as a useful tool to promote staff wellness leading to higher quality care of children.
September 1, September 2 (two sessions)	Trauma-Informed Care TOT / Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (ECMHCs), Social Workers	Virtual events provided to mental health consultants and social workers who work with implementation sites in the content of the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) ePyramid Modules (below), and to prepare these professionals for facilitating the content with other personnel at the implementation sites.

⁷ Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality, version 2.0, Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Susan Jack, and Denise Perez Binder (2017).

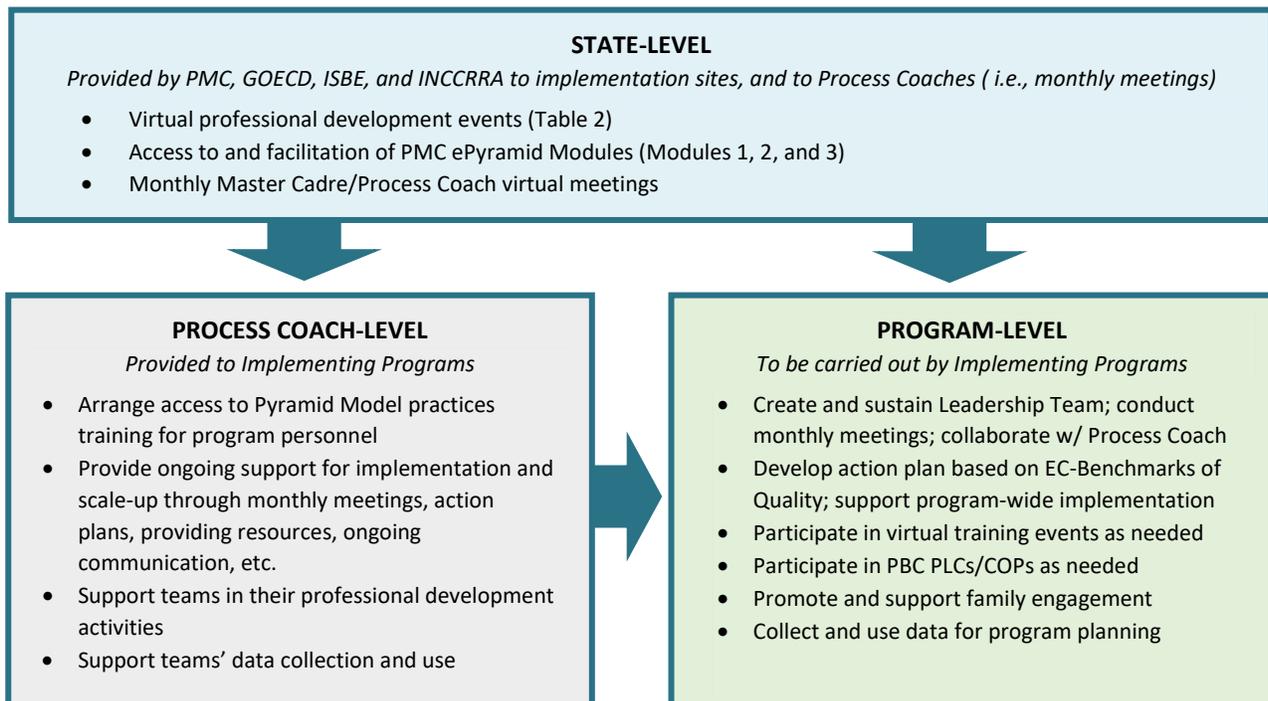
⁸ Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for Preschool Classrooms, Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, and Patricia Snyder (2010).

Dates	Event / Audience	Description
Access provided in September (self-paced, ongoing)	Trauma-Informed Care and the Pyramid Model, ePyramid Modules / Implementation Sites	Five hours of online lessons to assist teaching staff in understanding the impact of trauma on young children and their families and to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in young children. Adding the Trauma-Informed Care lens to existing Pyramid model practices promotes children’s social-emotional development, supports healing and resilience, and builds a foundation to support children’s resilience and recovery.
September 15-October 20, September 23-24	Practice-Based Coaching (PBC), 6-week and 2-day options / Instructional Leads of Implementation Sites, Process Coaches	Virtual events (12 hours each) designed for instructional leaders, team members, and Process Coaches to learn about creating shared goals and action plans, conducting focused observation, and providing feedback to practitioners to support Pyramid Model implementation.
September 17 October 15 November 19 December 17	Communities of Practice (COPs) / Instructional Leads of Implementation Sites	Monthly sessions devoted to PBC to provide ongoing support on selected topics and common interests. Participants share their work, issues, and practice experiences to develop group supported solutions and action plans in specific areas of Pyramid Model practices.
OCTOBER		
October 7-9	TPOT Reliability Training / Instructional Leads of Implementation Sites	A two-day training designed to prepare instructional leaders and other personnel who support teachers for administering the Teacher Pyramid Observation Tool within their programs. TPOT is a measure of implementation fidelity at the practitioner level.
October 8-29 (4 weeks)	PBC Professional Learning Communities / Instructional Leads of Implementation Sites	Small groups of internal coaches (instructional leads) meet one hour per week for four consecutive weeks to build skills in developing Action Plans and Goals to support PBC.
October 14	Guide to Reopening TOT / Pyramid Model Trainers	A two-hour session that provides resources and guidance for re-opening programs safely. This includes strategies for staff wellness, building relationships amid COVID-19, considerations for classroom environments when appropriate and promoting social and emotional skills with masks and social distancing. This session is full of practical strategies and supporting resources developed through the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations.
October 21	PBC Equity Guide / Instructional Leads of Implementation Sites	A three-hour interactive webinar that provides an opportunity to think deeply about engaging in coaching with an equity lens. Participants reflect on their own practice, engage in small group discussions using specific protocols, become familiar with the Equity Coaching Guide, and plan for future action.
October 28	Training in a Virtual Environment / Pyramid Model Trainers	A three-hour webinar to enhance participants’ virtual training skill set. This training will provide new ideas designed to help improve skills to provide high-quality, meaningful professional development in a time when the opportunity for in-person trainings is limited.
NOVEMBER		
November 2	Training in a Virtual Environment / Pyramid Model Trainers	As described above.
November 2	Guide to Reopening TOT / Pyramid Model Trainers	A two-hour session that provides resources and guidance for re-opening programs safely. This includes strategies for staff wellness, building relationships amid COVID-19, considerations for classroom environments when appropriate, and promoting social-emotional skills with masks and social distancing. This session is full of practical strategies and supporting resources developed through the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations.

Dates	Event / Audience	Description
DECEMBER		
December 1-3	Pyramid Model Practices Modules – Infant/Toddler TOT / Pyramid Model Trainers	Three-day virtual event to provide instruction on the use of the Promoting Social-Emotional Competence training modules for delivering high fidelity training to classroom practitioners for infants/toddlers.
December 4	PBC Equity Guide / Master Cadre	A three-hour interactive webinar that provides an opportunity to think deeply about engaging in coaching with an equity lens. Participants reflect on their own practice, engage in small group discussions using specific protocols, become familiar with the Equity Coaching Guide, and plan for future action.
December 7-9	Pyramid Model Practices Modules – Preschool TOT / Pyramid Model Trainers	Three-day virtual events to provide instruction on the use of the Promoting Social-Emotional Competence training modules for delivering high fidelity training to classroom practitioners for children ages 2-5 years.

In addition to these training opportunities, PMC and state leaders from GOECD and ISBE hold monthly virtual meetings with Process Coaches to provide guidance, discuss progress, address questions, and discuss evaluation requirements. More recently, these monthly meetings have been expanded to include the full Master Cadre, many of whom act as Process Coaches or will be taking on that role going forward. **Figure 2** below shows the relationship between the state-level, process coach-level, and program-level activities that comprise the vision for Pyramid Model implementation across the 37 sites.

Figure 2. Illinois Pyramid Model – Implementation Activities



Pyramid Model Evaluation

The evaluation⁹ was conducted by Evaluation Partners, an independent evaluation and technical assistance firm. Findings from Year 1 are provided in this report. The evaluation was comprised of ongoing feedback from the training events to support workforce development (Master Cadre, Pyramid Model Trainers), as well as a deeper look at progress and needs across the Pyramid Model implementation sites. For the PFAE sites in particular (formerly PDG-E), the evaluation was a continuation of a Pilot Study conducted by Evaluation Partners in 2018-2019.

As project activities pivoted in response to the pandemic, the evaluation was aligned with these changes. Specifically, the evaluation questions and data collection tools addressed the post-COVID context, and sought to learn about the unique experiences and needs of stakeholders during this time.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND METHODS

The evaluation was guided by a series of key questions shown below. The findings in this report are organized around these questions, followed by recommendations for going forward.

1. What was the level of participation across the professional development opportunities?
2. To what extent were the professional development events found to be effective and useful for participants?
3. What do implementing programs need to support their Pyramid Model efforts?
4. In what ways are Process Coaches supporting programs toward implementation?
5. To what extent are Process Coaches feeling prepared for their roles supporting programs? What training and supports would be most helpful going forward?
6. What types of implementation activities are underway at the program level?
7. What have been the facilitating factors for implementing programs this year? What do programs need going forward?

These questions were addressed through the data collection activities described below. Response rates are provided for each of these activities. The findings and recommendations in this report were derived from these sources. Formative findings have also been shared with PMC and state project leaders throughout Year 1.

Professional Development Feedback Forms

Online Event Feedback Forms were designed to gather feedback from participants following each virtual professional development event. The topics included participant progress on the relevant learning objectives, and the quality and usefulness of each event. Summary results were shared with PMC and state project leaders to provide feedback and to guide efforts going forward. The average feedback response rate across the 12 virtual events for which data were available for this report was 75%.

⁹ The evaluation was funded and supported by PMC as part of the IL PDG B-5 scope of work for the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). INCCRRA is currently aligning Pyramid Model training credentials within the state's professional development registry – *Gateways to Opportunity* – to increase the availability of qualified providers and help align data systems.

Program Profile of Implementation Sites

In mid-September, a brief online form was distributed to the 25 ISBE (PFAE) implementation sites that were continuing their Pyramid Model efforts. The Profile gathered descriptive information about each program's prior experience with the Pyramid Model, number of classrooms and teachers participating, and information about any staffing adjustments due to COVID-19 accommodations. The Program Profile also sought to learn about what programs needed most to support implementation efforts as they re-engaged in fall 2020, given adjustments to the current learning environment. Completed profiles were received from all 25 programs during September and October.

Process Coach Logs

An online Process Coach Log was designed for coaches to document the supports they provided to their programs throughout fall 2020, including Pyramid Model practices training sessions. For each substantive contact that Process Coaches made with their programs, the log captured details such as the amount of time spent providing support, who participated (i.e., roles of participants), the specific support activities that were conducted, and planned next steps. The purpose was to document project activities for project leaders and for the evaluation, while also providing Process Coaches with a system for capturing notes about their work and next steps for their own use. A total of 64 support contacts were logged by the Process Coaches across 23 of the 25 programs (92%).

Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BOQ)

The EC-BOQ is used by program Leadership Teams, often in coordination with Process Coaches, to assess progress toward program-wide Pyramid Model implementation and to develop action plans, and revisited as needed. These data are shared with the evaluation team to assess statewide progress. The participating programs are using the EC-BOQ version 2.0 which was updated in 2017 with new and revised benchmarks associated with culturally responsive practices to ensure equity. EC-BOQ results from fall 2020 were submitted for 17 of the 25 (68%) ISBE programs that re-engaged with Process Coaches in fall 2020.

Process Coach Survey

An online survey was designed to gather feedback from Process Coaches about project supports, professional development needs, perceptions of programs' progress, and ideas about how best to support programs going forward. The survey was distributed in November 2020. For the Year 1 evaluation, this data source served as the evaluation's best "early read" on implementation activities at the program level during fall 2020. Thirteen of the 16 coaches (those who were active with the IBSE projects) completed the survey for an 82% response rate.

Evaluation Findings

Q1. What was the level of participation across the professional development opportunities?

FINDING: There were more than 260 attendees across the real-time professional development events including members of the Master Cadre, personnel from the implementation sites, and members of the broader group of Pyramid Model Trainers. Additionally, more than 1,400 licenses for accessing the online ePyramid Modules in both Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care were distributed to the implementation sites for self-paced use among staff.

Table 3 shows the number of personnel who attended each event offered by PMC. As discussed above, events were open to different audiences based on the varied goals of the grant; attendees included the Master Cadre, Instructional Leads and other personnel from the implementation sites, and the broader group of Pyramid Model Trainers. All events shown in Table 3 were conducted virtually and attendance data were shared with the evaluation team. Facilitators also distributed feedback links after each event; as shown, response rates ranged from 54% to 86%, with an average response rate of 75%.

Table 3. Statewide Professional Development Event Participation

Event	Audience	Attendees	Feedback Responses	Response Rate
MAY - JUNE				
Practice-Based Coaching (PBC)	Master Cadre, Cohort 2	14	12	86%
PM Practices – Preschool TOT	Master Cadre, Cohort 2	14	12	86%
SEPTEMBER				
Wellness ePyramid Modules	Implementation Sites	1,439 licenses*	276	NA
Trauma-Informed Care ePyramid Modules	Implementation Sites	1,436 licenses*	93	NA
Trauma-Informed Care TOT	ECMHCs/Social Workers	31	24	77%
Practice-Based Coaching (PBC)	Instructional Leads, Process Coaches	24	17	71%
OCTOBER				
TPOT Reliability Training	Instructional Leads	20	14	70%
Professional Learning Communities	Instructional Leads	9	NA	NA
Guide to Reopening TOT	Pyramid Model Trainers	37	30	81%
PBC Equity Guide	Instructional Leads	13	7	54%
Training in a Virtual Environment	Pyramid Model Trainers	23	15	65%
NOVEMBER				
Training in a Virtual Environment	Master Cadre	11	(no data)	--
Guide to Reopening TOT	Pyramid Model Trainers	17	14	82%
DECEMBER				
PM Practices - Infant/Toddler TOT	Pyramid Model Trainers	12	10	83%
PBC Equity Guide	Master Cadre	24	18	75%
PM Practices - Preschool TOT	Pyramid Model Trainers	15	11	73%
		264 Total Attendees (with duplicates)		75% Average Response Rate

*PMC distributed licenses for access to the Wellness and TIC Modules to the implementation sites for self-paced learning; usage of the ePyramid Modules is continuing into 2021.

It is important to note that staff training in Pyramid Model practices (Modules 1 through 3) is an important foundational aspect of implementation. Training is provided by the Pyramid Model Professional Development Network (PDN) of trainers and coaches, made up of early childhood professionals in professional development systems across the state, including members of the master cadre. To provide context for this year, the Program Profile asked program leaders whether most staff had received training in the Modules as of fall 2020. Survey results suggest that 85% of programs have had all/most teaching staff trained in Module 1 (Relationships), 81% trained in Module 2 (Targeted Strategies), and 54% trained in Module 3 (Individualized Intervention).

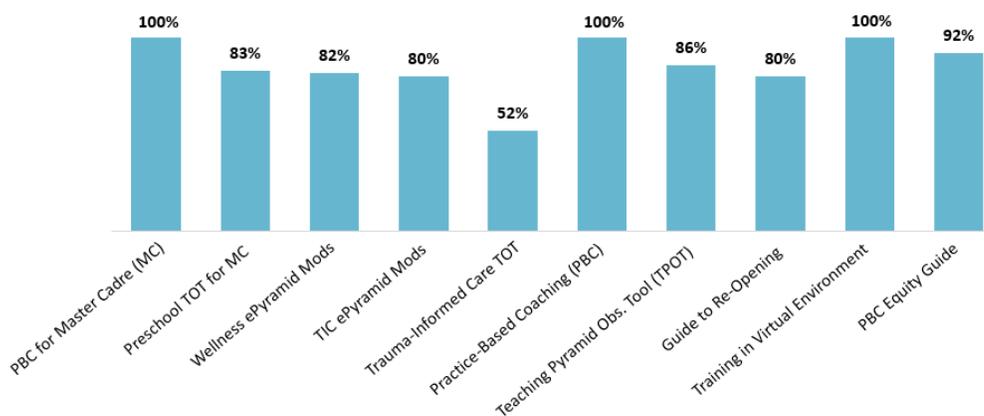
The implementation sites can also use the online ePyramid Modules for training staff, and many programs likely still have access granted through previous rounds of the Pyramid Model work. Based on data provided by PMC, requests this year for additional licenses have been modest. Specifically, two programs requested access (39 licenses for access to the Preschool version, and 15 for the Infant/Toddler version). Access to the Modules has also been provided to the Master Cadre, though usage with programs is not documented. With respect to programs' use of the licenses for access to Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care Modules referenced in Table 3, usage to date has been 476 of the 1,439 Wellness Modules (33%), and 301 of the 1,436 TIC Modules (21%).

Q2. To what extent were the professional development events found to be effective and useful for participants?

FINDING: Across events, the vast majority of participants indicated having met the learning objectives for each topic and rated the events as being high-quality. The highest rated events were Practice-Based Coaching, Training in a Virtual Environment, and the PBC Equity Guide for Instructional Leads and the Master Cadre.

Feedback summaries from each event were shared with project leaders to review event-specific detail, and to make adjustments going forward as needed. Each feedback form includes 4-5 relevant learning objectives, while the remainder of the form is standard across events. Across all events, the vast majority of participants indicated having met the learning objectives set out for the training. The feedback forms also include a rating of overall quality, as summarized in **Figure 3**. The rating options are on a 5-point scale, where 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, and 5=excellent. As shown, for most events, 80% or more participants rated events as very good or excellent. Of note, for the Trauma-Informed Care TOT event that was rated lower, the feedback indicated some participants' interest in follow-up learning opportunities, which were addressed by PMC following that event.

**Figure 3. Overall Ratings of Professional Development Events:
Percent Responding "Excellent" or "Very Good"**



In general, participants found the virtual training opportunities to be effective in meeting their needs. In terms of ‘universal’ comments and suggestions, there were several common themes across events.

- Participants indicated that specific strategies and resources shared during the events were most useful, as well as having opportunities to learn about what others are doing.
- Participants across events are generally interested in continued exploration of the topics, and opportunities to reflect and share information with each other.
- Across events, participants are interested in specific practices to support the content through the lens of the Pyramid Model framework.
- As virtual trainings continue, suggestion for future events include more time for discussion/ breakout rooms, and a careful balance of the amount of content with the time available.

FINDING: Participants typically found the statewide events to be relevant and useful to their professional practice. Across events, most participants expressed confidence that implementing the strategies has the potential to benefit the children in their care.

Event feedback also addressed the relevance and usefulness of the material presented – most of the items used were those set forth by Illinois as standard feedback items for statewide professional development. **Table 4** shows the percentage of respondents that indicated agreement across key topics.

With respect to event relevance generally, events in *PBC* and *Preschool Pyramid practices* for the Master Cadre received some of the highest ratings, as did *Training in a Virtual Environment* offered to Pyramid Model Trainers including the Master Cadre. The ratings for perceived usefulness were very high across most events. For the *Trauma-Informed Care TOT*, participants did not all feel confident about having the resources to implement the ideas presented.

Table 4. Participant Ratings of Event Relevance and Usefulness

Relevance	PBC for MC	Preschool TOT - MC	TIC TOT	PBC	TPOT	Guide to Re-Opening	Virtual Env.	PBC Equity Guide
Activities engaged participants allowing for analysis, discovery, and application as they relate to student learning, social or emotional achievement, or well-being.	100%	100%	76%	88%	86%	67%	93%	88%
This professional development aligned to my performance as an educator.	83%	100%	86%	100%	86%	91%	93%	88%
Usefulness	PBC for MC	Preschool TOT - MC	TIC TOT	PBC	TPOT	Guide to Re-Opening	Virtual Env.	PBC Equity Guide
This professional development will impact my professional growth or student growth in regards to content knowledge or skills, or both.	100%	83%	78%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%
This professional development will impact my social and emotional growth or student social and emotional growth.	92%	92%	78%	100%	93%	95%	100%	100%
The professional development aligned to my district or school improvement plans.	100%	75%	78%	100%	100%	95%	100%	100%
I am confident that I have the resources and human support to implement the ideas and practices presented.	100%	75%	52%	100%	100%	95%	93%	84%
The professional development will lead to improved learning for children.	83%	83%	52%	59%	79%	77%	60%	72%

Q3. What do implementing programs need to support their Pyramid Model efforts?

With project start-up in fall 2020, feedback from programs on the Program Profile in September and October (one survey per program) helped set the stage for program needs in the current learning environment. At the time of the survey, 62% of programs were operating remotely, 46% in-person, and 19% blended remote. That said, programs have continued to shift their learning models as needed based on local COVID-19 conditions.

In terms of program context, several respondents provided additional details about the learning environment such as plans for self-contained classrooms to return to in-person learning later in October with everyone returning in November. Another program noted that with the transition back to in-person learning, some families were choosing to remain remote. Finally, some programs that began with all remote learning were planning to shift to hybrid models in October. Relatedly, 15% of programs indicated that they would be operating at reduced staffing capacity. Some programs described effects on staffing, such as:

- the inability to fill open positions when staff needed leaves of absence,
- the reduced number of paraprofessionals in classrooms, difficulty hiring paraprofessionals, and
- anticipated challenges hiring substitute staff.

With these conditions in mind, programs indicated what they needed most at the start of the school year to support Pyramid Model efforts.

FINDING: Program leaders indicated the need for continued training and ongoing access to the Pyramid Model trainings (e.g., PM Modules, BIRS, TPOT). Other needs included continued support from Process Coaches, assistance for engaging and supporting families, and guidance for implementing the Pyramid Model remotely or with COVID-19 adjustments in classrooms.

- **Continued Staff Training in Pyramid Model Practices:** Several programs indicated the need for ongoing staff training in Pyramid Model practices; some requested ongoing access to the Modules for review at all times, and/or for expanding implementation. Several programs specifically mentioned the need for training in Module 3 (Individualized Intervention).
- **Additional Training to Support Implementation:** Several programs mentioned the need for BIRS (Behavior Incident Reporting System) training, along with other program-specific requests for PBC, TPOT, and TPITOS (Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation System) trainings. Other individual comments indicated: a need for clear guidance on specific goals with obtainable timelines to complete trainings; internal systems for providing differentiated professional development to staff; regional trainings for local programs to collaborate; and Kindergarten-related trainings.
- **Continued Coach Support and Local Efforts:** Several programs noted the importance of continued support from their Process Coach, including ongoing work and collaboration with their Leadership Teams. Programs mentioned the need to continue using the resources that have been provided, and time to keep practicing what they were learning. There was also mention of the need for in-person modeling of implementation from the internal coach.

- **Assistance Engaging and Supporting Families:** Several programs mentioned the need for strategies to support families during remote learning, and/or training for families' use of Pyramid Model strategies at home. One program commented, *"how do we EASILY help them access and practice Pyramid Model practices?"*
- **Implementing Pyramid Model During COVID:** Several comments pointed to the need for information about what Pyramid Model can "look like" in remote sessions, and ways to share/implement classroom practices related to social-emotional development and behavior without in-person contact. Relatedly, one program would like support for implementing Pyramid Model within the limitations of COVID-19 when they return in-person.

Taken together, these suggestions from programs are reflected in the work of PMC and Process Coaches throughout fall 2020. Process Coach activities are described in the following section, followed by descriptions of program-level progress and activities to date.

Q4. In what ways are Process Coaches supporting programs toward implementation?

Each program has been connected with a Process Coach to support implementation, which is an essential feature of the project guided by the Pyramid Model Consortium. For sites continuing their implementation efforts from prior years (ISBE sites funded through PDG-E and PFAE), the Process Coach assignments remained consistent to ensure continuity. During the first year of this evaluation, Process Coaches engaged with their programs in August/September 2020. Among the four Child Care Centers that launched with PMC in late November, Process Coaching was underway at the time of this report.

FINDING: Process Coaches are collaborating virtually with Leadership Teams, administrators, and internal coaches, among other staff. In fall 2020, the focus was on re-establishing team plans and goals, connecting staff to professional development opportunities with a focus on Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care, and supporting programs to assist families during remote and hybrid learning.

The Process Coach Logs captured the range of supports documented from August to December, and also pointed to the modifications that programs were making due to remote service delivery and other COVID-19 adjustments. A summary of Process Coach contacts with programs is provided in **Table 5** on the following page.

As shown, 23 of the 25 programs had support documented by the Process Coaches. The number of support contacts ranged from one to seven per program, with an average of three contacts per program during the August-December data collection cycle. Contacts ranged from 30 minutes to six hours, though most were in the range of one to three hours long, with an average of one and a half hours.

In terms of the ways in which Process Coaches connect with their programs, 83% of contacts were through virtual meetings, and 12% by phone. For comparison purposes, similar data from the 2019 PDG-E evaluation showed 65% of contacts were in-person site visits, and 3% were virtual meetings.

Table 5. Summary of Process Coach Log Contacts

Contact Details	August Start-up
Number of programs	25
Number / percent of programs with documented coaching contacts	23 / 92%
Timeframe of log entries	August – December 2020
Range of Process Coaching contacts documented per program	1-7 contacts
Average number of contacts per program	3
Range of duration of each contact	30 mins to 6 hours
Average duration of each contact	1.5 hours
Format of contact	Virtual meeting – 83% Phone call – 12% Site visit – 3% All of the above – 2%

Half of the time or more, Process Coaches worked with:

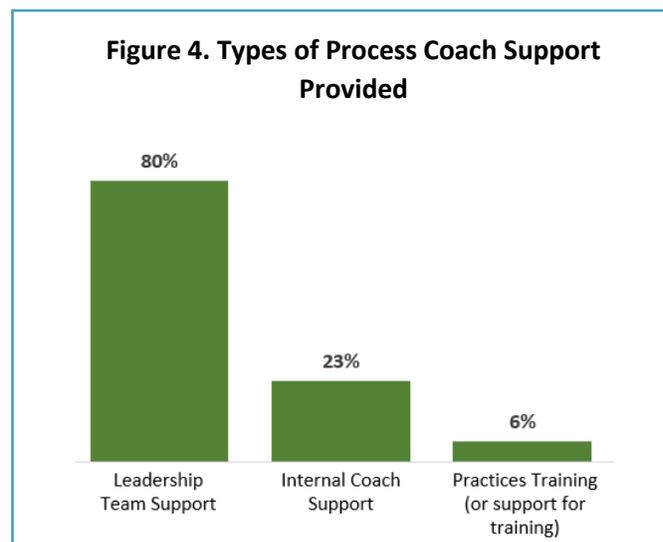
- Leadership Teams (60% of contacts)
- Program Administrators (55% of contacts)
- Internal Coaches (as noted, typically the instructional leaders) (50% of contacts)

Process Coaches also indicated frequent contact with classroom teachers, parent educators, and assistant teachers. Additionally, Process Coach support extended to behavior specialists, social workers, and mental health counselors.

Figure 4 shows the major categories of support that Process Coaches provided to their programs¹⁰. The majority of contacts focused on supporting Leadership Teams (80%), followed by support for internal coaches (23%). Additionally, 6% of contacts were related to supporting or providing Pyramid Model practices training.

The Process Coach Log entries indicated the alignment of the work with the Critical Elements of the EC-BOQ for program-wide implementation. Examples include:

- **Leadership Team Activities:** Re-establishing teams/identifying members, reviewing status after one to two years of implementation, articulating and clarifying action plans, and identifying areas of need for moving forward.
- **PD and Staff Support Plans:** Facilitating access to online trainings such as Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care and the ePyramid Modules (1-3), making connections to the PBC Professional Learning Community and/or Community of Practice opportunities (PLC/COP) for internal coaches, linking to BIRS resources.



¹⁰ The total percentage across the types of support is greater than 100%, as Process Coaches were able to indicate more than one type of support per contact.

- **Program-wide Expectations:** Re-establishing expectations for staff; sharing expectations with families (e.g., distribution of large photos/visuals listing rules for remote learning).
- **Family Engagement:** Support for introducing families to Pyramid Model and importance of routines and expectations at home and school, incorporating more home-to-school Pyramid practice to support family engagement, and virtual handouts for parent and child expectations.
- **Responding to Challenging Behavior:** Helping to build capacity to support teachers and families for children exhibiting challenging behaviors; developing plans for using the BIR.

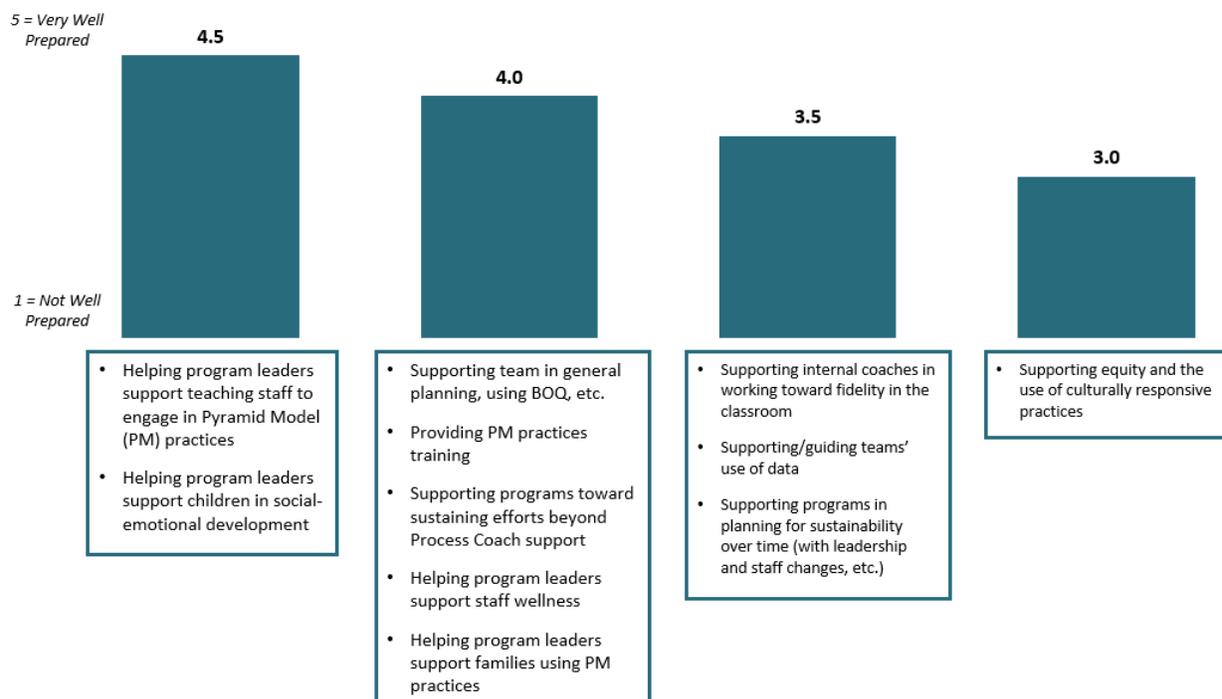
For several Child Care Centers that are just beginning their Pyramid Model efforts, Process Coach Logs indicate work toward establishing Leadership Teams, becoming familiar with Pyramid Model practices, and working on completion of the EC-BOQ for the first time.

Q5. To what extent are Process Coaches feeling prepared for their roles? What training and supports would be most helpful going forward?

FINDING: Process Coaches generally feel well-prepared for their roles and responsibilities. On average, the group feels best prepared for supporting their teams around the use of Pyramid Model practices and social-emotional skills development. Overall, the group indicated the most room for growth in guiding teams’ use of data, approaches to Pyramid Model sustainability, and supporting equity.

The survey distributed in November 2020 asked Process Coaches to indicate their preparedness for their work supporting ECEC programs, given the shift to remote service delivery. Each item was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=not well prepared and 5=very well prepared. Results are shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Preparedness for Process Coaching via Remote Service Delivery (n=13)



As shown in the figure, Process Coaches who responded to the survey feel best prepared for supporting teams in Pyramid Model practices and social-emotional development, followed by general planning (including using the EC-BOQ) and helping leaders support staff wellness. Specific areas with the greatest potential for growth include supporting fidelity in the classroom, guiding teams' use of data, supporting sustainability plans, and supporting equity. On the question of overall preparedness, 31% reported feeling "somewhat prepared", 39% "fairly well prepared", and 31% "very well prepared" (data not shown in Figure 5). The survey also asked Process Coaches to describe their training and support needs going forward.

FINDING: Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training opportunities related to remote coaching strategies, guidance around adapting Pyramid Model practices to remote/virtual teaching and learning, and more opportunities to reflect and share "what works" with other Process Coaches.

Process Coaches were asked to describe the ways in which they could be best supported going forward as work continues in a remote teaching and learning environment. Nearly all indicated interest in additional training in remote coaching strategies, and many mentioned guidance for classroom approaches or other program-level supports. Examples include:

- Additional training in remote coaching strategies; further direction on roles and expectations of an in-person or remote coach
- Strategies for building relationships in a virtual environment, creative training activities
- Strategies for re-establishing buy-in as program priorities have shifted (being mindful of keeping the balance, listening to individual program needs)
- Strategies to address the challenge of adapting Pyramid Model practices to remote learning; helping Pre-K teachers with best practices for virtual learning
- Virtual PLC or one-time webinar for Team Leaders to share implementation successes and challenges, discuss fidelity and sustainability
- Resources on systems development and/or Implementation Science to help guide programs

Several Process Coaches also identified the need for more opportunities to share strategies, successes, and challenges with each other (i.e., Community of Practice for Process Coaches). One coach mentioned the "Virtual training", commenting: "... *that was fantastic. It would be helpful if we could have another gathering to discuss what we've applied, what worked, what questions/ideas we do have.*"

Q6. What types of implementation activities are underway at the program level?

Implementation of the Pyramid Model framework at the program level was assessed in several ways for this report, including program-level data from the EC-BOQ completed by Leadership Teams, and descriptions of implementation activities provided through the Process Coach Survey. As the Pyramid Model work continues, the evaluation is slated to collect data about implementation and outcomes from the ECEC sites through Leadership Team Surveys and interviews. When it becomes feasible given program logistics, classroom-level TPOT data will also be an important measure of fidelity to the model, both locally for program staff, and as part of the grant evaluation.

PROGRAM-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION (EC-BOQ)

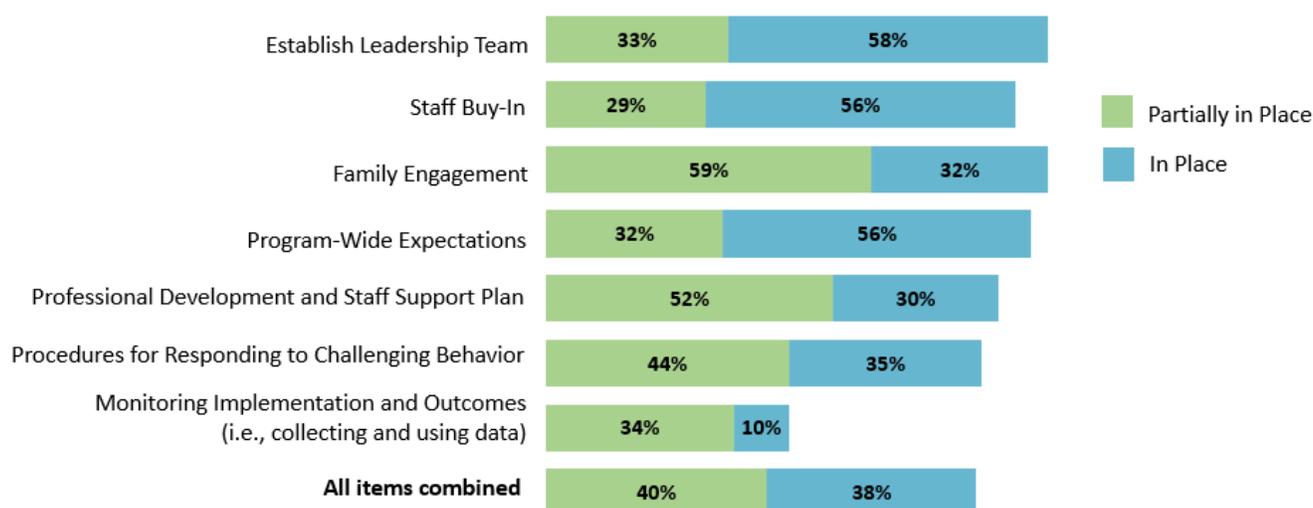
The EC-BOQ self-assessment consists of 41 benchmarks of high-quality implementation of the Pyramid Model framework across seven critical elements (critical elements are shown in **Figure 6**; the full list of indicators is provided in **Appendix B**). Each benchmark is rated on a scale of 0-2, where 0=*not in place*, 1=*partially in place*, and 2=*in place*. Leadership Teams are guided by PMC to use the EC-BOQ self-assessment tool at the outset of their Pyramid Model efforts to create an implementation/action plan, and to revisit the tool as often as needed to assess progress and adjust their plans. As a general guideline, teams are encouraged to use the EC-BOQ two times annually.

In using the EC-BOQ as a gauge of program progress, it is worth noting that the data are self-reported and based on each Leadership Team’s “Internal metric” for assessing their own progress. Taken together in the aggregate, however, the evaluation team looks to the results of these ratings to draw some general conclusions about overall progress based on this measure, such as areas of strength and potential growth.

FINDING: EC-BOQ results available from implementing programs in fall 2020 indicate that on average, Leadership Teams are reporting all critical elements are “partially in place”, with a fair portion reportedly “in place”. The strongest elements noted were Establishing Leadership Teams, Staff Buy-in, and Program-wide Expectations. The greatest areas for growth include collecting and using data (Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes), and Professional Development and Staff Support Plans.

Data for this finding are based on a summary of the EC-BOQ results submitted for 17 of the 25 ISBE (PFAE) programs engaged in implementation during fall 2020 (beginning in August). These programs have been engaged in Pyramid Model efforts for one to two years. **Figure 6** shows the average ratings for each critical element across all programs combined; the percentages represent the average rating across all benchmarks that comprise each element.

Figure 6. Fall 2020 EC-BOQ Results: Percent of Critical Elements “Partially in Place” and “In Place”



As shown in the figure, among the seven critical elements, implementation is reportedly furthest along in the following areas:

- ⦿ Establishing a leadership team
- ⦿ Staff buy-in
- ⦿ Program-wide expectations

The greatest areas for growth include:

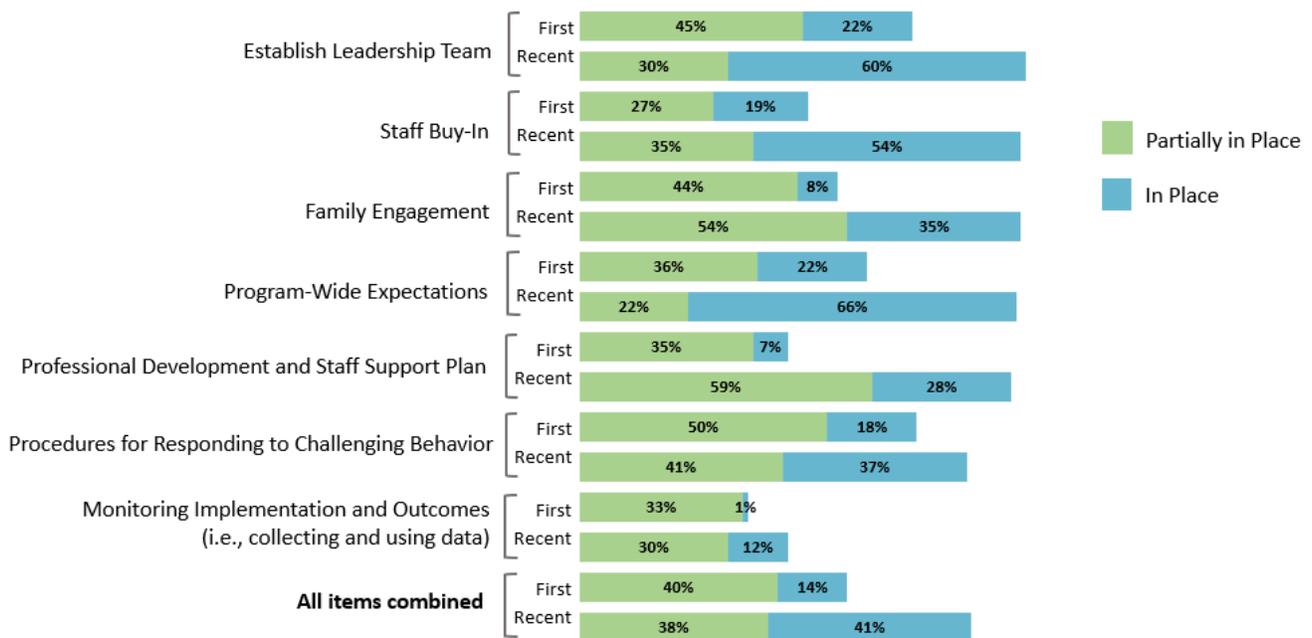
- ⦿ Collecting and using data (critical element “Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes”)
- ⦿ Professional development and staff support plans
- ⦿ Procedures for responding to challenging behavior

Data were also analyzed for the 13 programs that had EC-BOQ ratings from two points in time (n=11 PDG-E, n=2 PFAE). The average time between the first and most recent ratings was 22 months, with a range of 11 to 29 months.

FINDING: For a sample of implementation sites with data from two points in time, EC-BOQ results indicate progress over the past two years. For these programs, notable progress has been made in several areas including: Staff Buy-in, Family Engagement, Establishing Program-wide Expectations, and Professional Development and Staff Support Plans.

As shown in **Figure 7**, programs have reported growth over time, indicating progress toward program-wide implementation.

Figure 7. Fall 2020 EC-BOQ Results: Percent of Critical Elements “Partially in Place” and “In Place”



Finally, the EC-BOQ results can also be viewed by the total percent of points achieved out of the possible 82 points (41 indicators, each with a possible score of 2 to indicate “in place”). The average overall totals on

the first and most recent EC-BOQ self-assessments are shown below. The range within each grouping (first EC-BOQ and most recent) point to the variability of self-ratings across programs.

- **First EC-BOQ:** 33% overall for 13 sites combined, range of 11% to 56% by site
- **Most recent EC-BOQ:** 60% overall for 13 sites combined; range of 33% to 88% by site

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

FINDING: Pyramid Model implementation activities in fall 2020 included an emphasis on family engagement to bridge school and home; finding new ways to support children’s social-emotional development and sharing program-wide expectations; and working to connect staff to much-needed training opportunities. The training emphasis has been on Pyramid Model practices and staff Wellness (via ePyramid Modules).

Most Process Coaches provided descriptions of implementation activities at the program level, organized below by common themes. Several of these themes directly align with program needs and areas for development identified on the Program Profile.

PYRAMID MODEL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES



Family Engagement: In the current environment, teachers and Family Support staff are working more directly with families and sharing resources. Examples include programs holding more online events, e.g., "Parent Cafes", or sharing visual supports for use at home. Some programs are using virtual meetings to provide Pyramid Model training to families. Other programs have provided resources for children to use at home to emphasize social-emotional skills while making it fun. Overall, programs are striving to support families to implement social-emotional development and learning strategies that, prior to the pandemic, the program had provided.



Teaching and Learning: Some teachers began the school year by reviewing rules and expectations that are appropriate for virtual classrooms and establishing routines using visual charts and supports. Additionally, some programs are reportedly keeping a strong focus on social-emotional skills at this time, or seeing a greater focus this year. Examples include teachers talking about feelings/emotions, reading books about feelings, and providing links to resources on wellness and social-emotional supports. With respect to teachers’ work toward Pyramid Model fidelity, one program noted using a "TPOT flavor of month" as a shared focus (in-person and remote) and linking that activity to staff acknowledgment around the Pyramid Model. Other programs are working to support fidelity through teacher PLCs, guided by program leaders and internal coaches.



Relationships and Routines: Some programs have begun with a strong focus on building relationships and working for predictability and stability in the pandemic environment. Some programs indicated making transitions back and forth between face-to-face in person classrooms to full remote learning. These transitions have required more flexibility on the part of teachers and have presented some challenges for intentional lesson planning.



Professional Development: While Process Coaches indicated that some programs have plans for rolling out professional development, given the demands of the current environment, progress is slow. At this time, essentially all of the trainings are delivered as online ePyramid Modules, or via webinars; finding time to complete these trainings is a challenge. The Pyramid Model training and Wellness Modules are the trainings most frequently noted as “in process”. Some programs are accessing the ePyramid Modules and building them into their PLCs.

Q7. What have been the facilitating factors for implementing programs this year? What do programs need going forward?

FACILITATING FACTORS

FINDING: Process Coaches described approaches that are helping to move programs forward. Examples included facilitating access to training opportunities, providing resources (especially from NCPMI), maintaining strong relationships with Leadership Teams, using the EC-BOQ as a guide for planning, supporting teachers' use of Pyramid Model practices, and meeting programs "where they are" at this time.

Process Coaches described some of the strategies and resources that have been most effective during the first months of the school year. Examples included:

- **Access to Training:** Sharing information about Pyramid Model training events and opportunities; access to the Wellness ePyramid Modules that address how to recognize and reduce stress.
- **Fostering Relationships:** Building a strong relationship with the entire team, staying connected virtually; encouraging teams to problem-solve together drawing on available resources.
- **Leadership Team Support:** Staying involved in meetings virtually; planning for Leadership Team meetings by establishing agendas via Zoom with key leaders ahead of time; using breakout rooms for small group discussions. To support wellness, one coach described beginning meetings with an ice-breaker, one-minute breathing exercise, and having someone read the team's values statement.
- **NCPMI Resources:** Encouraging use of resources on the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) website, especially for supporting families to use Pyramid Model practices at home.
- **EC-BOQ as a Guide:** Several Process Coaches described using the EC-BOQ elements to help guide the implementation process. One Process Coach described creating separate digital files for each of the BOQ elements and sharing appropriate resources for each. In this example, subcommittees work on different areas of the BOQ to become "experts" for their team.
- **Classroom/Teaching Strategies:** Framing discussion of strategies to support children in their social-emotional development using Pyramid Model practices. In one example, using the TPOT to talk about areas to improve, turning to teachers skilled in those areas to share examples with staff. Also, facilitating PLCs around the ePyramid Modules for staff, meeting with the instructional coach for reflection and planning, and providing support via teacher podcast for "going deeper".
- **Recognizing Program Needs and Successes:** Some Process Coaches described supporting programs where they are, not pushing too hard. One mentioned helping teams make the connection with what they are already doing back to the Pyramid Model.

NEEDS GOING FORWARD

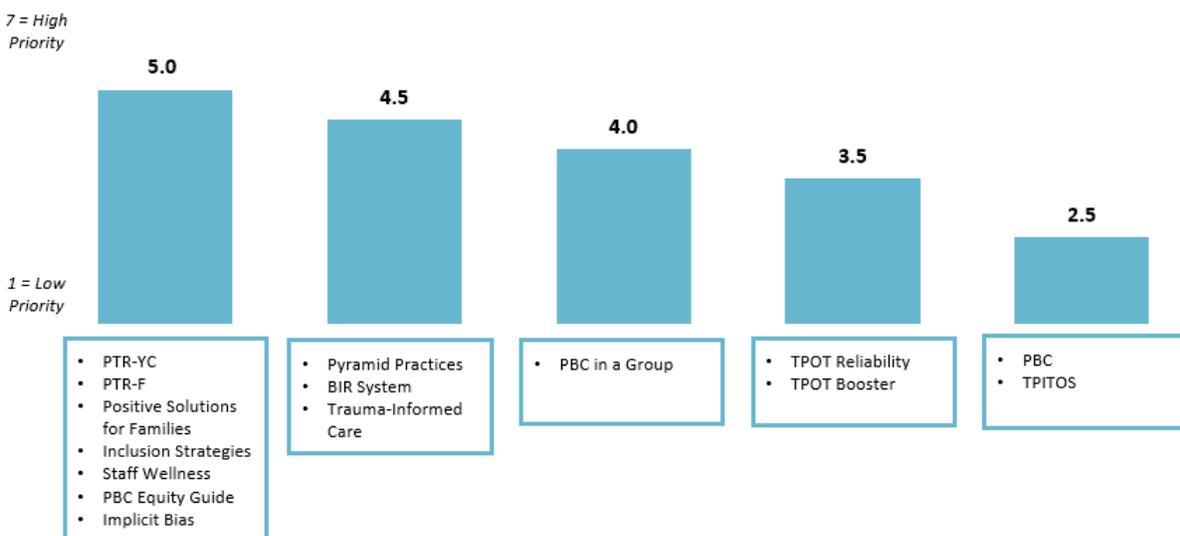
Process Coaches also provided feedback about the training and supports that programs would benefit from going forward. As a reminder, this survey was conducted just four to six weeks after the Program Profile, and as such reflects some of the same themes shared by program leaders.

FINDING: Professional development priority areas include trainings to support families (PTR-F, Positive Solutions for Families); training to support equity such as inclusion strategies, the PBC Equity Guide, and Implicit Bias training; and strategies to address challenging behavior via PTR-YC.

With respect to training needs, Process Coaches were asked to rate different topics from 1 to 7, where 1=Low Priority, and 7=High Priority. Summary results are shown in **Figure 8**. Five was the highest rating assigned by the group on average, and included several topics to support families – Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families (PTR-F), and Positive Solutions for Families. Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Children (PTR-YC) was also rated as a ‘5’. It is worth noting that these topics and others mentioned have already been scheduled by PMC for 2021.

Several other high priority topics relate to equity, including inclusion strategies, the PBC Equity Guide, and implicit bias training. Other areas mentioned most often – Staff Wellness, Trauma-Informed Care, and Pyramid Model practices – are all available via ePyramid Modules. Finally, training in the Behavior Incident Reporting System was noted to be a relatively high priority.

Figure 8. Process Coaches’ Perception of Professional Development Priority Areas for Programs (n=13)



FINDING: Going forward, programs would benefit from additional guidance around implementing the Pyramid Model remotely, ongoing support for staff buy-in, and continued support for families.

Process Coaches shared their perceptions of what programs need most at this time to support their Pyramid Model implementation efforts – examples are provided below. The group’s comments also indicated some of the challenges that programs are currently facing in the COVID-19 environment. Some of these conditions include shifting learning environments that require day-by-day planning, ongoing efforts to sustain staff engagement and buy-in given the daily demands, and managing remote learning.

- **Continued support for teachers** including **effective strategies for engaging children** during virtual learning.
- **Additional guidance on how to implement the Pyramid Model remotely** – what Pyramid Model can “look like” (i.e., environment, routines), and how to address challenging behavior during remote learning.
- **Ongoing support for engagement and buy-in** among staff for the Pyramid Model given the complex and competing demands during COVID.
- **Continuing to support families**, including examples and recommendations for how school personnel can help families to meet children’s social-emotional needs.
- **Continued communication about the value of Pyramid Model implementation** in the current learning environment, with recognition that it will look different for each program. Some suggested a “reboot” or retreat for experienced teams and start-up events for new teams.
- **Continued support for staff wellness** as staff respond to changes in the learning environment and other program modifications.

Taken together, these suggestions reflect the work underway as discussed throughout this report. Going forward, these areas of focus will continue to be important as programs and Process Coaches collaborate on next steps to support children and families. The following section provides a brief summary of this year’s findings and offers several considerations for going forward.

Summary

During 2020, state project leaders and the Pyramid Model Consortium collaborated to support the Pyramid Model implementation sites, and to strengthen the broader ECEC workforce. The work this year has been carried out within the context of COVID-19, where programs are providing services through a combination of in-person and remote settings, and Process Coaches are supporting programs virtually.

PMC provided professional development to Pyramid Model Trainers, the Master Cadre of Pyramid Model experts, and to Process Coaches who provide individualized support to the implementation sites. As of the writing of this report, there are 37 ECEC programs working toward Pyramid Model implementation across ISBE, Head Start, and Child Care Centers. The findings in this report are largely focused on the ISBE (PFAE) sites that continued to engage with their Process Coaches in fall 2020 toward Pyramid Model implementation.

Program leaders across the implementation sites indicated what they needed most in fall 2020 to support their efforts, which included continued training in Pyramid Model practices and other foundational topics, and continued support from their Process Coaches. Teams also indicated the need for strategies and resources to support families during remote learning.

For their part, the Process Coaches documented regular contact with their programs throughout the fall of 2020, providing supports that echoed the themes shared by program leaders. Specifically, they assisted programs with professional development by connecting staff to needed trainings; helped to re-establish program-wide expectations in the new learning environment; and supported family engagement, among other activities. New systems and approaches for connecting with Leadership Teams virtually were effectively put in place, and Process coaches focused on keeping these relationships strong.

In terms of their own professional development, Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training in remote coaching strategies, adapting Pyramid Model practices to a remote environment, and opportunities to share and discuss strategies with each other. Other areas for development include supporting equity, using data, promoting fidelity in the classroom, and supporting sustainability.

General progress toward program-wide implementation was evaluated using data from the EC-Benchmarks of Quality. For the programs that shared self-ratings during fall 2020, on average, teams reported that the critical elements are “partially in place”, with a fair portion “in place”. A subset of these programs had ratings from at least two points in time, which taken together indicated progress over the past two years. Some of the specific Pyramid Model implementation activities at the program level have included working more directly with families and sharing resources, supporting teaching and learning through visual supports, and as noted above, promoting program-wide expectations in the new learning environment. As noted by both program leaders and Process Coaches, resources from NCPMI have been extremely valuable, especially for supporting families.

The evaluation findings point to some considerations for state-level project leaders going forward in supporting the Pyramid Model framework. These points are based on a collective summary of input from program leaders and Process Coaches across multiple data sources.

- **Implementing the Pyramid Model in remote settings:** A key theme woven throughout the feedback was the need for helping program leaders and teaching staff conceptualize what the Pyramid Model can “look like” in remote teaching and learning. For example, how are high-quality environments and routines set up and communicated? How can TPOT processes to

ensure fidelity be adapted to the new learning environment? How are the Pyramid Model practices translated to virtual learning, including addressing challenging behavior? As new guidance is developed these will be important areas to consider in the coming months, given the likelihood that COVID-19 adjustments will be in place through at least spring 2021.

- ⦿ **Remote coaching strategies:** Related to the above suggestion, Process Coaches expressed interest in additional training opportunities to support remote coaching and for adapting Pyramid Model practices to a virtual learning environment. Process Coaches may also benefit from a forum to share strategies and solutions with each other (i.e., COPs), especially in light of the changes to the current learning environment.
- ⦿ **Access to ongoing professional development opportunities:** Ongoing training opportunities for the implementation sites in all aspects of the Pyramid Model will be essential going forward. This includes the ePyramid Modules (continual access if possible), foundational trainings such as PTR-YC and PTR-F, supporting equity, and continued use of the ePyramid Modules in Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care. As one program leader suggested, additional guidance around the suggested scope and sequence of trainings may be helpful.
- ⦿ **Continued support for Leadership Teams:** Continued and sustained support for Leadership Teams from Process Coaches – including continuing to build the capacity of instructional leaders for internal coaching and TPOT processes – will be essential. A Leadership Team retreat may be helpful in renewing the essential elements of high-quality implementation (including use of the EC-BOQ) and highlighting the importance of the Pyramid Model work at this time.
- ⦿ **Continued support for Process Coaches:** Beyond the shorter-term focus of remote coaching strategies mentioned above, Process Coaches may benefit from additional training to help programs support equity and use of culturally responsive practices, supporting internal coaches toward fidelity, guiding teams' use of data, and helping to move programs toward sustainability.

The Year 1 evaluation was based on several months of Pyramid Model activities that yielded descriptive information about the notable progress being made, as well as the unique challenges posed by the current learning environment. As the project moves forward and remote teaching and learning strategies are strengthened, a focus on program-wide implementation and fidelity to the model, and the related evaluation of these components, will be important next steps.

Appendix A: Fall 2020 Program Profile (ISBE Sites)

PROGRAM	PROGRAM TYPE	TOTAL # PREK CLASSROOMS	% CLASSROOMS WORKING ON PM	TOTAL # PREK TEACHING STAFF	% TEACHING STAFF WORKING ON PM	BEGAN PM
Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE), formerly PDG-E						
Cahokia School District 187	School-based	7	100%	16	100%	2018-19
Decatur SD 61: Pershing Early Learning Programs	School-based	21	100%	60	100%	2017-18
Dolton - Riverdale #148	School-based	11	100%	25	100%	2017-18
Dolton School District 149	School-based	6	100%	6	100%	2018-19
Elgin U 46	School-based	10	100%	10	100%	2017-18
Freeburg School District #70	School-based	1	100%	3	100%	2018-19
Lansing #158	School-based	6	100%	12	83%	2017-18
Lessie Bates	CBO	5	100%	9	100%	2018-19
McLean Co. Dist. No. 5	School-based	23	100%	100	*	2017-18
Metropolitan Family Services	CBO	17	100%	51	100%	2018-19
North Chicago CUSD 187	School-based	16	100%	18	100%	2018-19
One Hope United-Joliet/Aurora (Elgin site)	CBO	6	100%	11	100%	2020-21
One Hope United-Joliet/Aurora	CBO	6	67%	17	47%	2018-19
Rock Island ROE	School-based	1	100%	2	100%	2017-18
Rockford Public Schools #205	School-based	86	100%	86	100%	2017-18
South Berwyn	School-based	9	89%	9	89%	2018-19
The Children's Center of Cicero - Berwyn	CBO	4	25%	10	60%	2018-19
Valley View CUSD 365U	School-based	27	41%	135	100%	Prior to 2017-18
Preschool for All Expansion (PFAE)						
Carrollton CUSD	School-based	2	100%	2	100%	2019-20
ECDEC	School-based, CBO	27	100%	66	100%	2019-20
Harmony 175	School-based	7	100%	6	100%	2019-20
Havana 126	School-based	4	100%	8	100%	2019-20
Peoria Public School	School-based	27	19%	27	19%	2019-20
Smart Start Learning Center	*	3	67%	3	67%	2017-18
Unity Point 140	School-based	4	100%	8	100%	2019-20
Urbana School District	School-based	14	14%	64	11%	2019-20

* Data not provided.

Appendix B: EC-BOQ Critical Elements and Indicators

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM-WIDE BENCHMARKS OF QUALITY CRITICAL ELEMENTS AND QUALITY INDICATORS

Adapted from: Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality, version 2.0, Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Susan Jack, and Denise Perez Binder (2017)

ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Team has broad representation that includes at a minimum a teacher, administrator, a member who will provide coaching to teachers, a member with expertise in behavior support and a family member. Other team members might include a teaching assistant, related service specialists, a community member, and other program personnel.
2. Team has administrative support. Administrator attends meetings and trainings, is active in problem-solving to ensure the success of the initiative, and is visibly supportive of the adoption of the model.
3. Team has regular meetings. Team meetings are scheduled at least 1x per month for a minimum of 1 hour. Team member attendance is consistent.
4. Team has established a clear mission/purpose. The team purpose or mission statement is written. Team members are able to clearly communicate the purpose of the leadership team.
5. Program has a child discipline policy statement that includes the promotion of social and emotional skills, use of positive guidance and prevention approaches, and eliminates the use of suspension and expulsion.
6. Team develops an implementation plan that includes all critical elements. A written implementation plan guides the work of the team. The team reviews the plan and updates their progress at each meeting. Action steps are identified to ensure achievement of the goals.
7. Team reviews and revises the plan at least annually.

STAFF BUY-IN

8. A staff poll is conducted in which at least 80% of staff indicate they are aware of and supportive of the need for a program wide effort for (a) addressing children's social emotional competence and challenging behavior, (b) using culturally responsive practices, and (c) addressing implicit bias.
9. Staff input and feedback is obtained throughout the process – coffee break with the director, focus group, suggestion box. Leadership team provides update on the process and data on the outcomes to program staff on a regular basis.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

10. Family input is solicited as part of the planning and decision-making process. Families are informed of the initiative and asked to provide feedback on program- wide adoption and mechanisms for promoting family involvement in the initiative (e.g., suggestions box, focus group).
11. There are multiple mechanisms for sharing the program wide plan with families including narrative documents, conferences, and parent meetings to ensure that all families are informed of the initiative.
12. Family involvement in the initiative is supported through a variety of mechanisms including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting social development, and the outcomes of the initiative. Information is shared through a variety of formats (e.g., meetings, home visit discussions, newsletters in multiple languages, open house, websites, family friendly handouts, workshops, rollout events, access to staff with bilingual capacity).
13. Families are involved in planning for individual children in a meaningful and proactive way. Families are encouraged to team with program staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children including the development of strategies that may be used in the home and community.

PROGRAM-WIDE EXPECTATIONS

14. 2-5 positively stated program-wide expectations are developed.
15. Expectations are written in a way that applies to both children and staff. When expectations are discussed, the application of expectations to program staff and children is acknowledged.
16. Expectations are developmentally appropriate and linked to concrete rules for behavior within activities or settings.
17. Program staff and families are involved in the identification of the program-wide expectations that address needs, cultural norms and values of the program and community
18. Expectations are shared with families and staff assist families in the translation of the expectations to rules in the home.
19. Expectations are posted in classrooms and in common areas in ways that are meaningful to children, staff and families.
20. Strategies for acknowledging children's use of the expectations are developmentally appropriate and used by all program staff including administrative and support staff (e.g., clerical, bus drivers, kitchen staff).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF SUPPORT PLAN

21. A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in each classroom on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented.
22. Practice-based coaching is used to assist classroom staff with implementing the Pyramid Model practices to fidelity.
23. Staff responsible for facilitating behavior support processes are identified and trained.
24. A needs assessment and/or observation tool is used to determine training needs on Pyramid Model practices.
25. All teachers have an individualized professional development or action plan related to implementing Pyramid Model and culturally responsive practices with fidelity
26. A process for training new staff in Pyramid Model and culturally responsive practices is developed.
27. Incentives and strategies for acknowledging staff effort in the implementation of Pyramid Model practices are implemented.

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

28. Teachers have received training related to potential bias when responding to behavior challenges and have strategies to reflect on their responses to individual children
29. Program staff respond to children's problem behavior appropriately using evidence-based approaches that are positive, sensitive to family values, culture and home language, and provide the child with guidance about the desired appropriate behavior and program-wide expectations.
30. A process for responding to crisis situations related to problem behavior is developed. Teachers can identify how to request assistance when needed. A plan for addressing the child's individual behavior support needs is initiated following requests for crisis assistance.
31. Teachers have opportunities to problem solve with colleagues and family members around problem behavior. Teachers are encouraged to gain support in developing ideas for addressing problem behavior within the classroom (e.g., peer-support, classroom mentor meeting, brainstorming session).
32. A team-based process for addressing individual children with persistent challenging behavior is developed. Teachers can identify the steps for initiating the team-based process including fostering the participation of the family in the process.
33. An individual or individuals with behavioral expertise are identified for coaching staff and families throughout the process of developing and implementing individualized intensive interventions for children in need of behavior support plans.
34. Strategies for partnering with families when there are problem behavior concerns are identified. Teachers have strategies for initiating parent contact and partnering with the family to develop strategies to promote appropriate behavior.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

35. Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the leadership team on a regular basis.
36. The program leadership team monitors implementation fidelity of the components of program-wide implementation and uses data for decision making about their implementation goals.
37. The program measures implementation fidelity of the use of Pyramid Model practices by classroom teachers and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching support.
38. The program collects data on behavior incidents and program actions in response to behavior and uses those data to address child and teacher support needs.
39. Behavior incident and monthly program action data are analyzed on a regular basis to identify potential issues related to disciplinary action bias.
40. Program-level data are summarized and shared with program staff and families on a regular basis.
41. Data are used for ongoing monitoring, problem solving, ensuring child response to intervention, and program improvement.